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Application # 09/436/741 YMumford

What is Claimed is:

- 3) A safety guard to protect against inadvertent contact with an instrument having a sharp end, comprising:
- a) a hollow base disposed on such instrument in advance of such sharp end, said base comprising at least one side lug, an opposing lug, and a side face, said face including a hole;
 - b) a longitudinal member comprising a hinge end and a cover end, said hinge end hingedly connected to said base, said longitudinal member including two side walls and being of sufficient length to cover such sharp end and having a longitudinal slot wider than such sharp end, said opposing lug being disposed and shaped to fit into said longitudinal slot when said safety guard is in a closed position, said longitudinal member further comprising a protrusion at said hinge end, said protrusion being of such shape to be held between said at least one side lug and said opposing lug when said safety guard is in a closed position; and
 - c) a permanent locking mechanism comprising a rear locking tab attached to one of said side walls of said longitudinal member and a front locking tab attached to the other of said side walls of said longitudinal member, said front locking tab disposed between said rear locking tab and said longitudinal slot

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- d) wherein the rear locking tab has a trapezoidal cross section and wherein said front locking tab has a trapezoidal cross section and wherein the front locking tab is offset from said rear locking tab in a direction transverse to said longitudinal slot.
- 4) A safety guard to protect against inadvertent contact with an instrument having a sharp end, comprising:
- a) a hollow base disposed on such instrument in advance of such sharp end, said base comprising at least one side lug, an opposing lug, and a side face, said face including a hole:
- b) a longitudinal member comprising a hinge end and a cover end, said hinge end hingedly connected to said base, said longitudinal member including two side walls and being of sufficient length to cover such sharp end and having a longitudinal slot wider than such sharp end, said opposing lug being disposed and shaped to fit into said longitudinal slot when said safety guard is in a closed position, said longitudinal member further comprising a protusion at said hinge end, said protusion being of such shape to be held between said at least one side lug and said opposing lug when said safety guard is in a closed position; and

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c) a permanent locking mechanism comprising a rear locking tab attached to one of said side walls of said longitudinal member and a front locking tab attached to the other of said side walls of said longitudinal member, said front locking tab disposed between said rear locking tab and said longitudinal slot

d) wherein the rear locking tab has a trapezoidal cross section and wherein said front locking tab has a trapezoidal cross section and said front locking tab is offset from said rear locking tab in a direction transverse to said longitudinal slot, and wherein said front locking tab and said rear locking tab overlap in said transverse direction.

27) A permanent locking mechanism for a safety guard, wherein said safety guard comprises a longitudinal member that includes two side walls and a longitudinal slot, comprising:

a) a rear locking tab attached to one of said side walls; and a front locking tab attached to the other of said side walls.

b) wherein said rear-locking tab has a trapezoidal cross section and said front locking tab has a trapezoidal cross section

c) wherein said front locking tab is offset from said rear locking tab in a direction transverse to said longitudinal slot.

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- 28) A permanent locking mechanism for a safety guard, wherein said safety guard comprises a longitudinal member that includes two side walls and a longitudinal slot, comprising:
a rear locking tab attached to one of said side walls; and a front locking tab attached to the other of said side walls,
wherein said rear-locking tab has a trapezoidal cross section and said front locking tab has a trapezoidal cross section, wherein said front locking tab is offset from said rear locking tab in a direction transverse to said longitudinal slot, wherein said front locking tab and said rear locking tab overlap in said transverse direction.

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